



Date: May 20, 2026

To: Members of the Senate Health & Welfare and House Human Services Committees

From: Chad Simmons, Executive Director, Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAV)

We want to take this opportunity to thank members of the committees for your work on H.938. We know it has been a multi-year, many stakeholder endeavor. Thank you. We appreciate the collaborative approach that engaged AHS, HHAV members and providers, a broad coalition of advocates, as well as people with lived experience, to craft and inform this bill.

As this bill moves into the final stages of passage and, we expect, to the Governor for signature, we wanted to extend an invitation to build upon this year's work and deepen the opportunities to work together. Specifically, we look forward to quickly transitioning from policy development to implementation and working collaboratively with OEO and DCF on turning this policy into practice. We are grateful for the changes made in the Senate to include more opportunities for engagement and input during the rule making process and we welcome the opportunity to proactively shape how the law will be implemented over the next year. Additionally, while H.938 codifies much of Vermont's current homelessness response into state statute, we see several ways to improve upon what is currently drafted and welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with AHS and the legislature moving into the summer/fall and next legislative session. We invite returning members to work with HHAV members in future legislative sessions to improve upon the work we did together this year.

A few key areas we hope can be addressed moving forward to build upon and improve H.938:

- Commitment and sustained investments in affordable housing development, specifically for those experiencing homelessness or at risk of housing instability
- Commitment and multi-year investments in shelter development, especially shelter that could be converted into permanent affordable housing
- More resources, capacity and flexibility to provide trauma-informed, person-centered case management.
- Simplification and easing of prioritization and household responsibility (eligibility) requirements that allow maximum shelter and service provider flexibility to meet the diverse needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Based on data and evidence (ex: Coordinated Entry, HMIS and HIC), adjust shelter type (level) time limits and caps so that they align with actual need and shelter capacity in order to ensure everyone in need has a shelter option available to them.

Again, thank you for your commitment to improving our homelessness response system, programs and opportunities to serve those most in need. We look forward to continuing our collaboration together.